

Zine by Kimi

# How to sabotage an organization

or

What NOT to do in your organization



Based on  
"Simple Sabotage Field Manual" (1944)  
by Central Intelligence Agency

# INTRO

In 1944, the CIA published a field manual for secret agents to bring down organizations from inside. The manual contains suggestions on how to damage vehicles and equipment, how to make faulty decisions, obstruct meetings and create an unpleasant environment in the organization, without being detected or identified as a saboteur.

In my personal experience of volunteering for various organizations, I've noticed the same patterns of behavior in some members, who intentionally or unintentionally constantly sabotaged the organization. Even if you're doing it unintentionally, recognizing these patterns is crucial to prevent self-sabotage.

In this zine, I will focus on the chapter "General Interference with Organizations and Production" and offer my own comments and suggestions on how to prevent sabotaging your own organization.

### WHAT NOT TO DO:

1. Insist on doing everything through "channels". Never permit shortcuts to be taken.

CORRECT ACTION: Just do it. It's easier to ask forgiveness than it is to get permission. (Grace Hopper) Do the right thing within the organization, whether or not they know it.

### WHAT NOT TO DO:

2. Make speeches. Talk as frequently as possible and at great length. Illustrate your points by long anecdotes and accounts of personal experiences.

### CORRECT ACTION:

Be direct and brief. Cut to the chase.  
Don't waste everyone's time.

### WHAT NOT TO DO:

3. Call meetings when there is more critical work to be done. Insist on everyone to be present. Suggest additional work groups and make them as large as possible.

CORRECT ACTION: If you see a problem, fix it. Make executive decisions for the benefit of the organization.

#### WHAT NOT TO DO:

4. Bring up irrelevant issues as frequently as possible.
5. Bitch about precise wordings of resolutions and communications.
6. Refer back to matters already decided upon at the last meeting and attempt to re-open the topics.

CORRECT ACTION: Don't be annoying. Don't bicker over something objectively trivial. Accept that collective manifestos might be worded differently to your own personal manifestos.

#### WHAT NOT TO DO:

7. Advocate "caution". Urge your comrades to avoid rushing into things which might result in embarrassments or difficulties later on.
8. Be worried about the propriety of any decision - whether such action lies within the jurisdiction of the group or whether it might conflict with the policy of *some other group*.

CORRECT ACTION: Don't be annoying. Accept collective responsibility even if you personally disagree with the decision.

#### WHAT NOT TO DO:

4. To lower morale, give praise to inefficient members and discriminate against efficient members, complain unjustly about their work.
5. Spread rumors about other members.

CORRECT ACTION: "If what you were about to tell me was neither true, good, nor useful; why did you want to tell me?" (Socrates' filter against gossip)

#### WHAT NOT TO DO:

6. Forget to relay information to others.

CORRECT ACTION: If you often forget to relay information, refuse to relay information.

#### WHAT NOT TO DO:

7. Give lengthy and incomprehensible explanations when questioned.

CORRECT ACTION: Excuses should be short. E.g. instead of explaining your entire family situation, just say "family reasons".

#### WHAT NOT TO DO:

8. Assign important work to the most inefficient and inept members.

CORRECT ACTION: While someone might be eager to take the responsibility, they might not have the capacity to do so. Do not allow inept members to take responsible tasks.

# During actions

## DO NOT:

1. Be late or cancel your participation last minute

CORRECT ACTION: Plan ahead. Leave early to make it on time. If you know in advance that you won't make it, inform everyone about it as soon as possible and make it your priority to find replacement. Do not under any circumstances ignore or ghost everyone. People rely on you.

## DO NOT:

2. Ask another member to do stuff you were supposed to do. (Pick someone who is already burdened with other stuff)

CORRECT ACTION: Plan ahead. Do not agree to tasks if you don't have the capacity. If you already accepted and your capacity is diminished, inform the whole group and ask for help. Do not burden one person directly.

DO NOT:

3. Forget to charge/change batteries, forget to take tools or supplies.

CORRECT ACTION: Plan ahead. Take spare batteries, power banks and charging cables. Take extra tools and supplies just in case.

DO NOT:

4. In urgent situations, refuse the best solution due to “principles”. (Refuse to take a TAXI, refuse to buy water...)

CORRECT ACTION: Be ready for compromises. Think about the end goal. If successful action requires you to break some principles, maybe you should break some principles.

Why are so many organizations plagued by the same patterns of self-sabotage?

The first step to preventing these harmful patterns is identifying them.

This zine covers the points presented in the infamous CIA “Simple Sabotage Field Manual” and offers some suggestions on how to avoid sabotaging your own organization.

Online version:

<https://archive.org/details/how-to-sabotage-an-organization>

